

Governor's Office of Planning and Budget

Employee Handbook

This handbook has been written in general terms and should not be used as an authority for technical interpretations. It does NOT represent a contract between you and the Office of Planning and Budget. It is only provided to assist you in understanding your role as an employee of this agency in state government. The handbook highlights selected areas involving your employment with us. It is intended to supplement the Human Resource Policies and Procedures Manual that is available to you in your Human Resource Office.

If you have any questions concerning your employment or the content of this handbook, please contact your Human Resource Office.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 AGENCY BACKGROUND

The Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) provides the Governor with assistance in the development and oversight of the state budget; with developing and updating annually a State Strategic Plan; with working with all state agencies in the development of their own strategic plans and ensuring that they conform to the state plan; and with program evaluation.

1.2 VISION

OPB will be a guiding force for fiscal and public policies that will promote a prosperous, healthy and safe Georgia.

1.3 MISSION

The mission of the Office of Planning and Budget is to advise and support the Governor and other policy makers to improve state government by managing financial and other resources, providing information, and assisting with policy development and implementation.

EMPLOYMENT

2.1 AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT

The Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) is an “at-will” employer. Your employment has no specified term and that the employment relationship may be terminated any time at the will of either the employer or the employee on notice to the other.

2.2 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) maintains a policy of nondiscrimination with all employees and applicants for employment. All aspects of employment are governed on the basis of merit, competence, and qualifications and will not be influenced in any manner by race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, or disability.

Any incident alleging discrimination or violation of civil rights, including sexual harassment, should be reported to an appropriate management authority within the office. Such discrimination or violations will not be tolerated and will be grounds for corrective disciplinary actions.

The Equal Employment Division of the Commission on Equal Opportunity enforces the Georgia Fair Employment Practices Act of 1978, as amended, which makes it unlawful for a state agency to discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, national origin, color or retaliation.

2.3 EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION

Exempt

Employees whose positions meet specific tests established by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and are exempt from overtime pay requirements.

Non-exempt

Employees whose positions do not meet FLSA exemption tests and who are awarded compensatory time at a rate of one and one-half times their hours worked in excess of forty (40) per week.

Full-time

Employees who are scheduled for a forty-hour (40) workweek on a regular basis for at least nine-months in a year. Full-time employees are eligible for all benefits when applicable service requirements are met.

Part-time

Employees scheduled to work less than a forty (40) hour workweek on a regular basis. If employed for a workweek of at least thirty (30) hours, employees are eligible for same benefits offered full-time employees through the State Health Benefit Plan and the State Flexible Benefits Program. You must be employed at least thirty-five (35) hours per week to be eligible for retirement benefits.

Temporary

Employees scheduled to work on a time-limited basis. Temporary employees are not eligible for employee benefits available to full-time or part-time employees who are employed for thirty (30) hours or more a week.

2.4 WORK SCHEDULE

The Office of Planning and Budget's standard office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., Monday through Friday, with a 45-minute lunch. The scheduled workweek is from Friday at midnight to Friday at midnight. Office hours may vary for those employees working for an agency attached to the Office of Planning and Budget for administrative purposes only.

Your supervisor is responsible for designating your work schedule. All employees are to report and remain at work in accordance with established work schedules unless on authorized leave. Alternate workweek schedule/flex time may be available at the discretion of the agency head and/or division director.

2.5 TELEWORKING

The Office of Planning and Budget may offer employees the opportunity to work from home (telework) for the benefit of both the agency and the employee. If you are interested in teleworking, contact your supervisor. Teleworking may not be suitable for all employees and/or positions. An employee's participating in the teleworking program is entirely voluntary. The Office of Planning and Budget may terminate the telework arrangement at any time.

2.6 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS (PMP)

The PMP calls for managers and employees to share accountability for job performance. Employees and their managers and supervisors are expected to work together year-round to make every day's work count in an ongoing process that measures actual performance against expectations and rewards on-the-job achievement. This year-round, interactive process is a continuous cycle of planning, coaching, evaluating, and developing.

The performance management plan document is a tool for the supervisor and the employee to summarize performance planning and evaluation. Your signature and the signatures of your supervisors are required for each plan. Your signature does not, in any respect, indicate your agreement with the comments or rating. It indicates that you have reviewed its contents and have had an opportunity to include your comments.

Performance evaluations are used in determining salary increases and may be used in the consideration of job classification, transfers, promotions, demotions, dismissals, reductions in force, or other Human Resource issues.

2.7 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

On-going dispute or conflict with your supervisor, coworker, or other staff member may be addressed through mediation. The Georgia Merit System (GMS) has formed a statewide pool of over 50 mediators who have received intensive training in non-adversarial conflict resolution skills, negotiation skills, and problem solving techniques. Employees may request mediation and managers may refer employees to mediation. When selecting a mediator, GMS considers the needs of the parties and the needs of the organization including the nature of the conflict, the demographics of the parties involved, the location of the mediation, and the expertise of the mediator. Contact your Human Resource Office for information. All inquiries are **CONFIDENTIAL**.

2.8 GRIEVANCE

A procedure is available for all employees that provides for the resolution of disputes or complaints. This procedure allows grievances to be addressed using a range of activities from informal discussion through a formal grievance hearing. Contact your Human Resource Office for information.

2.9 DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Disciplinary action is usually initiated with a counseling session between supervisor and employee. If necessary, other levels of disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal may be appropriate. Your supervisor is responsible for documenting the need for any disciplinary action.

The Office of Planning and Budget may terminate any corrective measures at any time solely at its own discretion. The use of progressive discipline does NOT change the at-will employment status of any employee.

2.10 STAFF DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING

Each employee is encouraged to seek, in consultation with your supervisor, training that enhances employee productivity, morale, and helps prepare him/her to seek promotion to a higher level. At each performance appraisal review, you and your supervisor may discuss your employee development needs. Your supervisor will inform you of specific training programs available to you and the Human Resource Office will schedule your participation in these programs. Your supervisor must approve your participation in any training program.

2.11 BUSINESS TRAVEL EXPENSES

The Office of Planning and Budget may reimburse employees for reasonable business travel expenses in accordance with the State of Georgia Travel policy when the immediate supervisor has approved the travel request in advance. Contact your supervisor for guidance and assistance on procedures related to travel arrangements, travel advances, expense reports, reimbursement for specific expenses, or any other business travel issues.

Falsifying reports or failure to follow this business travel expense policy may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

2.12 SAFETY

If an injury or accident occurs on the job or during travel, no matter how slight, report it immediately to your supervisor or division director. Failure to report an injury could affect a subsequent Workers' Compensation claim. Medical attention should be sought from the provider listed on the posted Worker's Compensation Official Notice if the injury is to be covered by Workers' Compensation. You should, at all times, maintain a current emergency telephone number and contact person in your Human Resource file.

Vehicles owned, leased, or rented by the State of Georgia may not be used for personal reasons. You may not carry passengers in a State of Georgia vehicle unless doing so is in the course of official state business.

2.13 SECURITY

The Office of Planning and Budget authorizes the issue of identification and security cardkey badges for employees. This information is required for access to authorized state facilities. The identification badge must be available for presentation at all times. Do not allow anyone else to use your identification badge or security cardkey. You may be charged a fee for the replacement of security cardkeys.

2.14 PAYDAYS

Paychecks are issued on the 15th and last workday of each month. If either of these dates falls on a holiday or weekend, you will be paid the day immediately preceding the normal payday. Hourly employees are paid on a pay-cycle lag and receive payment in the pay period following the pay period in which the hours are worked.

2.15 ADMINISTRATIVE PAY CORRECTIONS

The Office of Planning and Budget takes all reasonable steps to ensure that you receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck and that you are paid on the scheduled payday. If there is an error in the amount of pay you receive, you should promptly advise the Human Resource Office. All employees may be held liable for the return of salaries improperly, accidentally, or illegally paid to them.

2.16 COMPANY PROPERTY

Office space and computer equipment and other property issued to or made available for your use is for the purpose of conducting the business of the Office of Planning and Budget. The Office of Planning and Budget retains all rights to both space and property. All communication may be considered public property and may be subject to review at any time with or without your knowledge or permission. You retain no expectation of privacy. You are responsible for Office of Planning and Budget property in your possession. We may withhold income or take legal steps to recover property or recoup costs for failure to return property

2.17 HUMAN RESOURCE RECORDS

Important events in your history with the Office of Planning and Budget will be recorded and kept in your Human Resource file. Performance evaluations, change of status records, commendations, and educational attainment records are examples of records maintained. Employees may schedule appointments to review their own Human Resource file in the Human Resource Office. It is the employee's responsibility to report any change in address, telephone number, name, tax withholding or other relevant information to the Human Resource Office.

2.18 OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Employees of the Office of Planning and Budget must obtain agency approval to hold concurrent jobs outside the Office of Planning and Budget.

2.19 RESIGNATION

Resignation is defined as a voluntary act initiated by an employee to terminate employment with the Office of Planning and Budget. Although there is no requirement that you give advance notice, doing so can reduce the impact on your co-workers and productivity. We request that employees submit a written notice of resignation at least 14 days in advance.

Employees will be asked to complete an exit interview questionnaire so that we may understand the reasons for resignation. The Human Resource Office will issue letter documenting the employment status and benefit information for terminating employees.

2.20 WEATHER EMERGENCIES AND OFFICE CLOSING

If it is necessary to close state offices during business hours due to inclement weather, state agencies will be notified by a blast fax and e-mail from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency on behalf of the Georgia Merit System. If the decision to close offices is made during non-work hours, staff will be officially notified by:

- WSB Radio 98.5 FM
- WSB Radio 750 AM
- KISS Radio 104.1 FM
- The Beat 95.5 FM
- Jamz 97.1 FM

The resources listed above are the only official channels designated to report state office closings. Areas outside of metropolitan Atlanta should tune into local stations that are part of the Peach State Public Radio Network for official announcements.

Announcements may also be received by calling 404-656-2705 or by visiting www.gms.state.ga.us.

For information regarding employee absence during a weather emergency, contact your Human Resource Office.

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

3.1 PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Employees are required to conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner to other employees, supervisors, and the public at all times. You, as a state employee, are a public servant and a representative of Georgia State government and the Governor's Office.

An employee shall avoid any action which might result in or create the appearance of: a) Using his/her public office for private gain; b) Impeding departmental efficiency or economy; c) Losing complete independence or impartiality; and d) Affecting adversely, confidence of the general public in the integrity of the Office of Planning and Budget.

3.2 ETHICS

In compliance with the Official Code of Georgia, Section 45-10-1 (1968 Ga. Laws 1369), the Office of Planning and Budget is subject to the Code of Ethics for Government Service. Refer your copy of the January 13, 2003 Executive Order establishing a Code of Ethics for Executive Branch Officers and Employees for information. Contact your Human Resource Office if you have any questions.

3.3 ATTENDANCE

Prompt and regular attendance is required of each employee. Your supervisor is responsible for approving any changes or adjustments to your work schedule.

Any absence of an employee during the employee's assigned work schedule must be accounted for under OPB Work Schedule and Leave policy. Proper leave reporting is the responsibility of both the employee and the immediate supervisor. Any employee who is absent from duty for the equivalent of five (5) consecutive workdays without proper notification and authorization thereof may, within the discretion of OPB, be deemed to have resigned voluntarily from employment.

3.4 DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

The Office of Planning and Budget strictly prohibits the unlawful manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possession, or use of any controlled substances at any time, including in the workplace. Such unlawful activity will be considered a sufficient ground for serious adverse Human Resource action, up to and including dismissal from employment.

3.5 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Intimidation, harassment, or other threats of (or actual) violence are strictly prohibited on the premises of the Office of Planning and Budget. Employees are expected to refrain from fighting, "horseplay," or other conduct that may be dangerous to others. We prohibit firearms, weapons, and other dangerous or hazardous devices and substances from the premises of OPB without proper authorization. OPB will not tolerate conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another employee, a customer, or a member of the public at any time, including off-duty periods.

Report all threats of (or actual) violence, either direct or indirect as well as any suspicious persons, as soon as possible to your supervisor or any other member of management.

3.6 USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS

The Office of Planning and Budget is dedicated to providing a healthy, comfortable and productive work environment for all employees. All smoking and use of tobacco products is prohibited in offices operated by the Office of Planning and Budget. Please contact your supervisor or the Human Resource Office for further information.

3.7 RECYCLING

OPB supports environmental awareness by encouraging recycling and waste management in our business practices and operating procedures. We have special recycling receptacles set up at OPB to promote the separation and collection of the paper and aluminum cans. Contact your supervisor for information regarding the location of the receptacles in your area.

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## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

### 4.1 HEALTH INSURANCE

State employees are eligible for health care benefits through the State Health Benefit Plan. A variety of indemnity, preferred provider (PPO), health maintenance organization (HMO), and Consumer Choice (CCO) options are available.

Eligible employees have an opportunity to participate in the State Health Benefit Plan upon hire. It is important that you carefully choose and understand the options. Decisions are binding for each benefit plan year. Refer to your benefit plan booklet for Consolidate Omnibus Reconciliation Act (COBRA) information.

#### 4.2 FLEXIBLE BENEFITS

The state of Georgia offers vision insurance, dental insurance, term life insurance, health and dependent care spending accounts, short-term and long-term disability, spousal and dependent life, long-term care, legal insurance, and accidental death and dismemberment. Insurance through the state Flexible Benefits Program

Eligible employees have an opportunity to participate in the Flexible Benefits Program upon hire. It is important that you carefully choose and understand the options. Decisions are binding for each benefit plan year. Refer to your benefit plan booklet for Consolidate Omnibus Reconciliation Act (COBRA) information.

The Office of Planning and Budget provides an additional term life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment, and dependent life insurance plan with Shenandoah Life Insurance Company.

#### 4.3 TRANSPORTATION

The state of Georgia offer pre-tax parking, van pool, and mass transit benefits to state employees. Contact your Human Resource office for information

#### 4.4 CHILD CARE

The Georgia Building Authority administers the Capitol Hill Child Enrichment Center (CHCEC) located on Capitol Hill. CHCEC offers extended morning and evening hours and summer camp options as well as significantly discounted daycare rates for the children of state employees. For more information, please visit [www.state.ga.us/gba/services/child\\_center.html](http://www.state.ga.us/gba/services/child_center.html) or call the center at 404-463-8161.

#### 4.5 RETIREMENT

Eligible employees are enrolled in the state's mandatory defined-benefit retirement program, the Employees' Retirement System. Both you and your employer contribute to the system. In addition to defined benefits, employees are enrolled in a group term life insurance program. Employees hired on or after July 1, 1982 contribute one and one half per cent of their monthly earnings to the retirement systems.

The purpose of the Employees' Retirement System is to provide you and your beneficiary with either life income or lump sum cash refunds in the event you become disabled, die or retire while an employee of the state and a member of the State Retirement System. The benefits under the System, together with any benefits available to you from Social Security, are designed to provide you with security in your old age or in the event of an unforeseen disability.

If you leave state employment before becoming eligible for retirement, you are entitled to a refund of your contribution plus interest credit. Because of Federal tax laws, you may wish to examine the feasibility of keeping your contributions in the Retirement System. These options should be discussed with a retirement system representative at that time.

Those employees who are not eligible to enroll in the Employees' Retirement System may be required to enroll in the Georgia Defined Contribution Plan administered by the Employees' Retirement System. The member contribution rate is seven and one-half percent (7 ½%) of gross salary. The amount deducted is credited to the individual account of the member. Benefits are based solely on the amount contributed to each participants account.

#### 4.6 HOLIDAYS

Holidays authorized by state statute are:

|                                   |                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| New Year's Day                    | Independence Day |
| Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday | Labor Day        |
| Robert E. Lee's Birthday          | Columbus Day     |
| Washington's Birthday             | Veterans' Day    |
| Confederate Memorial Day          | Thanksgiving Day |
| National Memorial Day             | Christmas Day    |

The Governor proclaims all holidays. The observances of holidays that occur while the General Assembly is in session are generally scheduled in conjunction with other holidays after the General Assembly recesses. To be eligible for payment for a holiday or unanticipated workday, an employee must be in pay status for the full scheduled work shift the day before or after the holiday.

#### 4.7 ANNUAL LEAVE

Full-time employees earn annual leave each month after forty hours (40) or more in pay status in each pay period at the following rate:

| <u>Length of Service</u>        | <u>Rate of Accrual</u>           |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 0 through 60 months inclusive   | = five (5) hours per pay period  |
| 60 through 120 months inclusive | = six (6) hours per pay period   |
| 121 months and over             | = seven (7) hours per pay period |

Part-time, salaried employees who work twenty (20) hours or more per week earn annual leave prorated by the percentage of time worked.

Annual leave may be accumulated up to a maximum balance of 360 hours.

Annual leave is available for your vacation and your personal affairs. Your supervisor must approve the use of accumulated leave in advance. You should request the use of annual leave as early as possible to allow the supervisor time to arrange work distribution with minimal interruption of workflow. A supervisor must consider factors such as workload, deadlines, and other employees' leave requests before the leave request is approved. If you are absent without authorization your salary may be docked and you may be subject to disciplinary action.

#### 4.8 SICK LEAVE

All employees except those who are hourly, temporary, or emergency earn sick leave at the rate of five (5) hours per pay period

Part-time, salaried employees who work twenty (20) hours or more per week earn sick leave at a rate prorated by the percentage of time worked.

Unused sick leave may be accumulated up to a total of 720 hours.

The use of sick leave is restricted to absences due to the employee's own sickness or disability, appointments for medical, dental, or eye examination or treatment, or for absences necessitated by the employee's exposure to contagious disease or absence due to dental care, medical care, illness, accident, or death in the employee's immediate family that requires the employee's presence. A statement from a health care provider is required for all absences in excess of 17 hours and may be required for any absence.

#### 4.9 PERSONAL LEAVE

Employees who have accumulated more than 120 hours of sick leave, as of November 30 of any year, may convert up to 24 hours of the accumulation in excess of 120 hours to personal leave. This leave must be used during the following calendar year or it will be lost. Sick leave, once converted to personal leave, CANNOT be restored and personal leave may not be accrued from one year to the next. Personal leave may be used for personal reasons upon the approval of the Division Director. The Division Director shall make every reasonable effort to accommodate requests to utilize personal leave. Employees shall normally be required to provide a 24-hour advance notice of intent to use personal leave.

#### 4.10 FAMILY/MEDICAL LEAVE

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) allows eligible employees to take job-protected, unpaid leave, or appropriate paid leave, for up to a total of 12 workweeks in 12 months because of the birth of a child, the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care, the employee's care of a family member with a serious health condition, or the employee's own serious health condition. In certain cases, family medical leave (FML) may be taken on an intermittent basis rather than all at once, or the employee may work a part-time schedule. The rights apply equally to male and female employees of OPB.

#### 4.11 COURT LEAVE

Court leave may be allowed if a federal, state, or local court subpoenas you to serve as a juror or witness. You may not, however, use court leave if you are a plaintiff, defendant or other principal party, or if you have any personal or familial interest in a case or proceeding, unless the litigation is job related. You may request to use annual leave for any proceedings in which you have a personal interest.

An employee shall request court leave from his/her supervisor as soon as a jury summons or subpoena is received. The employee shall notify his/her supervisor of any change in time required for court leave and be able to provide documentation of attendance or need for extension.

#### 4.12 LEAVE DONATION

Under limited circumstances, employees who are eligible to earn leave may be eligible to donate or receive sick leave from other OPB employees. Leave donation shall be strictly voluntary. The identity of donors shall be confidential and shall not be provided to the recipient or to any other individual unless necessary to administer the donation or required by law. Contact your Human Resource Office for information.

#### 4.13 OTHER LEAVE

An attempt will be made to provide employees with an opportunity to utilize time off the job for those situations that affect all our lives. Some of those times in which leave is provided are when employees desire to take time away from the job for reasons such as military leave. Military and other special types of leave are fully discussed in the Work Schedule and Leave Policy:

Other types of leave include:

|                                  |                   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Military Leave                   | Voting            |
| Blood Donation                   | Kidney Donation   |
| Disaster Volunteer               | Adverse Action    |
| Disability Injuries – Restricted | Leave without pay |

#### 4.14 DEFERRED COMPENSATION

The Deferred Compensation Program allows an employee an opportunity to defer receipt of a portion of his/her current salary and to invest this portion in one or more approved savings or investment funds. No current state and federal income taxes will be paid on the deferred dollars. Contact your Human Resource Office for information.

#### 4.15 DIRECT BANK DEPOSIT

Direct banking deposit authorizes the Office of Planning and Budget to electronically deposit an employee's net pay into his/her bank account. Employees must accrue sixty (60) hours and maintain a minimum balance of forty (40) hours of annual leave to participate.

#### 4.16 CREDIT UNION

Employees may join the State Employees' Credit Union (SECU) for savings, checking and loan services. Individual employees and their immediate family may become SECU members upon proper application and SECU Board acceptance. Contact the SECU office for additional information and services.

#### 4.17 CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

The Georgia General Assembly created a statewide charitable contributions program to authorize a statewide opportunity for employees to make financial contributions to help others. Payroll deductions are available. Contact your Human Resource Office for information.

#### 4.18 SAVINGS BONDS

The Office of Planning and Budget offers employees the opportunity to request payroll deductions for the purchase of US Savings Bonds. Contact your Human Resource Office for information.

#### 4.19 EMPLOYEE DISCOUNTS

The state occasionally offers promotions and discounts on the purchase of entertainment ticket for amusement parks, sporting and other entertainment events. Contact your Human Resource Office for information.

#### 4.20 EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION PROGRAM

The State of Georgia Employees' Suggestion Program was created by law to encourage employees to make suggestions for improving state government operations. Employees may nominate other state employees. You may receive recognition and/or reward for your creativity and involvement. Contact your Human Resource Office for information.

#### 4.21 FAITHFUL SERVICE

Employees are eligible for faithful service awards ranging from certificates to pins.

#### 4.22 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

At times, personal events and issues may affect your ability to perform your job as expected. Assistance or counseling may be available to help you bring your job performance up to standard. Contact your Human Resource Office for information. Inquiries are  
CONFIDENTIAL.

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## **EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

The employee handbook describes important information about the Office of Planning and Budget. I understand that I should consult the Office of Planning and Budget Human Resource Office regarding any questions not answered in the handbook.

I have entered into my employment relationship with the Office of Planning and Budget voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no specified length of employment. Accordingly, either the Office of Planning and Budget or I may terminate the employment relationship at-will at any time, with or without cause so long as there is no violation of applicable federal or state law.

Since the information, policies, and benefits described in the handbook are subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the Human Resource policies and/or the handbook may occur. All such changes will be communicated through official notice.

I acknowledge that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document. I have received the handbook and I understand that it is also my responsibility to read and comply with the Office of Planning and Budget Human Resource Policies and any revisions thereof.

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Employee Name (Please Print or Type)

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Employee Signature

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Date